The Black Lives Matter movement began in 2013 as a response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman after he brutally murdered Trayvon Martin, a young, black, and unarmed teenager. Founded by three Black organizers, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, BLM has grown into a global movement that both acknowledges Black humanity and calls for an end to the unrelenting state-sanctioned violence against Black bodies. Most recently, and against the backdrop of a global pandemic, Black Lives Matter protests have erupted across the globe in response to the murder of yet another unarmed Black man, George Floyd in Minneapolis and happening on the heels of the murders of Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery.

Anti-Black violence in any part of Turtle Island has brought many to rage and resistance, including those of us in what we now call Canada. In that respect, a similar, albeit unique trajectory can be seen for the development of the Black Lives Matter movement north of the US border. Moved to action by the murders of those in both the US and Canada, four activists in Tkaronto (Toronto) including Sandy Hudson, Yusra Khogali, Janaya Khan and Pascale Diverlus, strategized to make the realities of anti-black violence and racism seen and heard in the Canadian context. Focusing on education, the arts, the connection to decolonization and the fight for queer and trans rights, Black Lives Matter - Canada is a movement that continues to spread, with chapters all over the country, including Vancouver, Montreal, London and Sudbury.

Just as the list of names of unarmed Black folx murdered by the police continues to grow, efforts to end anti-Black violence in all its forms continues to gain steam. Interestingly, and as George Floyd’s final words reveal, mothers remain a central touchstone of this movement. Mothers and those who engage in care work are central to the survival of communities, especially during times of struggle and crisis. On the one hand, we see how, for example, the mothers of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Jermaine Carby and Tamir Rice (just to name a few) reveal the strength and resilience of mothers as they demand justice and continue to challenge the power structures that took the lives of their children. We also see this historically. The image of Mamie Till and Emmet Till’s open casket funeral comes to mind. On the other hand, we witness the day-to-day toll of anti-Black violence. The deaths of Erica Garner (Eric Garner’s daughter), Venida Browder (Kalief Browder’s mother) and the parents of Atatiana Jefferson stand as chilling examples and testaments to the concrete impacts of the ongoing terror and the pain of loss.

This collection is interested in exploring the experience of mothering and “motherwork” (Collins 2002) alongside the movements and efforts to protect and value Black life as well as the fight against anti-Black, state-sanctioned violence. In addition, we hope to explore the just world that we hope to create for the future. We aim to be inclusive of all mothers—single mothers, queer
mothers, trans mothers, disabled mothers, to name a few—as well as those who don’t identify with the gendered label of mother but contribute to the important work of caring for families, children, and communities, however that may look. In addition, although the examples referenced above are largely based in the U.S. and Canada, we are interested in global perspectives that explore historical examinations of the aforementioned topic as well as contemporary examples rooted in the current political moment.

Potential topics include (but are not limited to):
- The intersections of movement building, activism and motherhood
- Single mothers’ experiences
- Queer, trans, and non-binary experiences
- International/global movement building
- Media representation
- Reproductive health and birth work
- Mental health and well-being
- Allyship and/or anti-racist parenting
- “Motherwork”, “othermothering”, community mothers, and Aunties
- History of social movements and Black motherhood
- Artivism and creativity
- The decolonization of motherhood practices through BLM
- Intersections with Indigenous organizing
- Abolition
- Intersections between BLM other social movements

We welcome essays from all disciplinary perspectives and interdisciplinary work is especially encouraged. We hope to include academic pieces as well as personal narratives and creative submissions (art, poetry, and creative writing). Most important, we seek a collection that is accessible and grounded in solidarity with the movement. We hope to prioritize and center contributions from those directly impacted and those involved with organizing and activism work in their respective communities. We are also open to discussions on how to make this project more collaborative and as inclusive as possible.

Submission Guidelines: Abstract proposals (300-400 words) with a 50-word biography are due by October 1, 2020. Acceptance letters should go out by mid-December 2020. Completed manuscripts (15-18 pages double-spaced with references in MLA format) will be due April 1, 2021. Please note, acceptance will depend on strength and fit of the final piece. Please send inquiries and abstracts to editors at: mothersblm@gmail.com.